

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

RESTRICTED

November 29, 1944

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I have been discussing informally with representatives of the War and Navy Departments the matter of improving existing methods of obtaining for the State Department advice on politico-military matters and of coordinating the views of the three departments on matters in which all have a common interest, particularly those involving foreign policy and relations with foreign nations. By a letter to you dated 16 November 1944 I suggested to you the formation of a committee of representatives of the three departments to deal with problems relating to the Far East. At a meeting with the Assistant Secretary of War and the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air on 20 November it was generally agreed that it might be desirable to expand this proposal to provide for a committee which might deal with a much wider range of interdepartmental problems and serve as a convenient channel of interdepartmental communication.

Accordingly, I suggest the formation of a committee to be composed of representatives of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, and the Secretary of the Navy, charged with the duty of formulating recommendations to the Secretary of State on questions having both military and political aspects and of coordinating the views of the three Departments in matters of interdepartmental interest. In view of the fact that much of the work of the proposed committee will deal with foreign policy, it is assumed that the representative of the State Department should serve as Chairman of the Committee.

If the committee is formed, I propose to designate Mr. James G. Dunn, Director of the Office of European Affairs, as the State Department representative. I hope the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy will each designate a ranking member of his own office as his representative. Each member of the committee, of course, should be free to be designate an alternate or alternates to act for him in his absence. Appropriate panels or sub-committees of the committee could be formed to deal with particular problems. For example, in dealing with matters relating to the Far East, Mr. Dunn would probably plan to associate with him a high officer of the Department of State having special knowledge of affairs in that area. Doubtless the representatives of the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy will find occasions on which similar assistance will be desirable.

As I visualize the proposed committee, it should have a secretariat composed of at least one competent and experienced representative of each department and it should be authorized to call upon the three departments for such technical advice and assistance as may from time to time be required. The secretariat would be charged with the proper disposition of communications requesting the views of the War Department and the Navy Department on politico-military questions and arranging with the committee members for reference of such inquiries, in appropriate cases, for the comments of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. After the formation of the committee, inquiries for military advice would be directed by the State Department to the Secretary of War and the Secretary of Navy jointly, rather than making such inquiries as a matter of direct communication with the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

If the

The Honorable

Henry L. Stimson,

RESTRICTED

If the committee is formed I hope that for a period at least, it will plan regular meetings, making arrangements, however, for informal clearances through the Secretariat of matters not requiring decision at formal meetings.

If you concur in the foregoing proposal, I shall be glad to learn from you whom you may wish to assign to the committee. As soon as representatives of the War and Navy Departments have been thus assigned, Mr. Dunn will be designated as the representative of the State Department. I hope that the committee can begin to function at an early date.

I am sending a letter, similar in form to this, to the Secretary of the Navy.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ E. R. STETTINIUS, JR.